WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method, comprising the steps of:

5   providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different;

storing a project definition that includes: a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port

10 that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition; a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination

15 portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports; and

20 automatically initiating execution of said project definition in response to a change to data in said data source.

2. A method according to Claim 1, including the steps

25 of:

causing said data source to automatically generate a trigger in response to a change to data therein;

causing said data source to automatically transmit said trigger through a communications link; and

30 responding to receipt of said trigger through said communications link by effecting said initiating of execution of said project definition.

3.   A method according to Claim 2, including the step of expressing said trigger in a public communication protocol.

5   4.   A method according to Claim 3, including the step selecting as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

5.   A method according to Claim 2, including the step
10   of configuring said communications link to include a network.

6.   A method according to Claim 5, including the step of configuring said network to include a portion of the
15   Internet.

7.   A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function definitions that are different, said program being operable when executed to facilitate:

5   storing of a project definition that includes: a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the

10   corresponding function definition; a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an

15   input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports; and

automatic initiation of execution of said project

20   definition in response to a change to data in said data source.

8.   A computer-readable medium according to Claim 7, wherein said program is operable when executed to effect

25   said automatic initiation of execution in response to receipt through a communications link of a trigger automatically generated and transmitted by said data source in response to a change to data therein.

9. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said trigger is expressed in a public communication protocol, and wherein said program is operable when executed to accept said trigger in said public

5   communication protocol.

10. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 9, wherein the public communication protocol in which said trigger is expressed is the eXtensible Markup Language

10   (XML) protocol, and wherein said program is operable when executed to accept said trigger in said eXtensible Markup Language protocol.

11. A method, comprising the steps of:

providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different;

storing a project definition that includes: a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition; a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports; and

automatically initiating execution of said project definition in response to receipt through a communications link of a trigger expressed in a public communication protocol.

12. A method according to Claim 11, including the step of selecting as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

13. A method according to Claim 11, including the step of configuring said communications link to include a network.

14. A method according to Claim 13, including the step of configuring said network to include a portion of the Internet.

15.   A method according to Claim 13, including the
step of causing a network browser program to respond to a
manual input event by effecting the transmission of said
trigger through said communications link.

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16.   A computer-readable medium encoded with a
computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined
function definitions that are different, said program being
operable when executed to facilitate:

5   storing of a project definition that includes: a
plurality of function portions which each correspond to one
of said function definitions in said set, and which each
define at least one input port and at least one output port
that are functionally related according to the
10   corresponding function definition; a further portion which
includes a source portion identifying a data source and
defining an output port through which data from the data
source can be produced, and which includes a destination
portion identifying a data destination and defining an
15   input port through which data can be supplied to the data
destination; and binding information which includes binding
portions that each associate a respective said input port
with one of said output ports; and

        automatic initiation of execution of said project
20   definition in response to receipt through a communications
link of a trigger expressed in a public communication
protocol.

        ·17.   A computer-readable medium according to Claim 16,
25   wherein the said public communication protocol in which the
trigger is expressed is the eXtensible Markup Language
(XML) protocol, and wherein said program is operable when
executed to accept said trigger in said eXtensible Markup
Language protocol. ·

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